Enforcement of ban on mining activity in Aravalli Range

169. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have appointed any committee to ensure the enforcement of ban on mining activity in Aravalli Range including Sariska Tiger Reserve;

(b) whether the committee has been directed to assess the damage done to the environment, ecology and wildlife by the mining activity carried on in that area;

(c) if so, the details of the observations/recommendations made by the committee;

(d) what is the reaction of Government with regard thereto; and

(e) the progress of the afforestation projects for the Aravalli Hills taken up so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Supreme Court has appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of a retired Chief Justice of the High Court of Delhi to go into the issues concerning the enforcement of the notifications issued under various laws for the protection of the forests and the wildlife, including the banning of mining operations as ordered by the Court and the assessment of damage and remedial measures, within the protected areas of the Sariska Tiger Reserve which falls under the Aravalli Range. In addition, the Central Government have, with a view to regulate certain activities that cause environmental degradation, including mining, notified the Gurgaon district of Haryana and the Alwar district of Rajasthan which fall under the Aravalli Range under the Environment (Protection), Act 1986. The Central Government have also constituted a Committee to appraise the development projects from the environmental angle in these districts in the context of the notification issued under the Environment (Protection), Act 1986.

(c) The Committee appointed by the Supreme Court has made an interim report on 28-9-92 and requested the Supreme Court to allow a period of three months to enable it to make its recommendations regarding the provision of alternative mining areas for the balance expiry period of the lessees and the assessment of the damage done to the environment, as well as, the remedial measures required to be undertaken. The matter is still under consideration of the Court. The committee appointed by the Central Government on 4-12-92 is to start its work shortly.

(d) In view of the reply given in answer to part (a), (b) and (c) above, the question does not arise at this stage.

(e) The afforestation of the Aravalli Hills is a continuing activity undertaken by the State Government on an annual basis keeping in view of the availability of funds, including the funds provided by the Central Government. However, the Government have taken special steps to afforest and develop the Aravalli Hills through the implementation of externally aided project, viz. "Rehabilitation of Common Lands in the Aravalli Hills in Haryana" for which the assistance is being provided by the European Economic Community (EEC), and the "Afforestation Projects for Aravalli Hills, Rajasthan" for which assistance is being provided by the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), Japan.

Delhi Pollution Control Board

170. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:
SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a lot of tension is prevailing between Delhi Administration and Central Government in regard to three environmentalists sent by Central Pollution Control Board to Delhi Pollution Control Committee on deputation basis;

(b) whether Delhi Administration while taking the Environmentalists in this Committee, had requested the Cenrtal Board to depute them for three years and the Central Board had given full assurance to cooperate in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that consequent upon calling back these three Environmentalists from Delhi Pollution Control Committee by the Central Board, the work of the Committee as well as the actions initiated so far in this regard are likely to come to a halt; and

(d) if not, what is the clear cut approach of Government in regard to pollution control and what does it propose to do in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. Only three environmental engineers were deputed initially for 6 month.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The approach of the Government is given in its Policy Statement for Abatement of Pollution which seeks integration of environmental and economic aspects in development planning; lays stress on the prevention aspects of pollution abatement, promotion of technological inputs for reducing the industrial pollutants and increasing reliance on public cooperation in securing a clean environment.

Cleaning of the Ganga Water

171. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even after six years of taking up cleaning operations, the Ganga water is not yet fit for drinking at some places;

(b) the places where it is still the most polluted; and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the progress achieved so far is as per the target fixed;

(d) if not, what are the constraints in the cleaning operations; and

(e) the steps contemplated to expedite the cleaning operations of the Ganga?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The objective of the Ganga Action Plan is to reduce pollution in the river Ganga and improve its water quality to the bathing class.

(b) The Ganga water satisfies the norms in terms of dissolved oxygen and bio-chemical oxygen demand prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board except at Kanpur where the flow in the river is critically low during lean season and schemes for treatment of sewage of South Kanpur were not taken up in the First Phase.

(c) and (d) Most of the schemes under the Ganga Action Plan will be completed by 31st March' 94. However, a few schemes are likely to spill over beyond this date due to delay and difficulty in acquisition of land court cases and poor response to tenders etc.

(e) Every effort is being made to complete the on-going schemes expeditiously. The progress of implementation of schemes is being continuously monitored at various levels in the Central and State Governments.